September 1948.

Background Facts

COMMUNISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

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New Militancy Shown

Until recently it was not certain that Communism would become a major issue in Indonesia. Its adherents there, though having held government posts in Republican areas and being strongly entrenched in the Republican labor movement, are not strong enough to rule by legitimate means. But on September 18, after absorbing left-wing front parties, the Communists seized Madiun, third largest Republican city on Java, and launched a full-scale civil war.

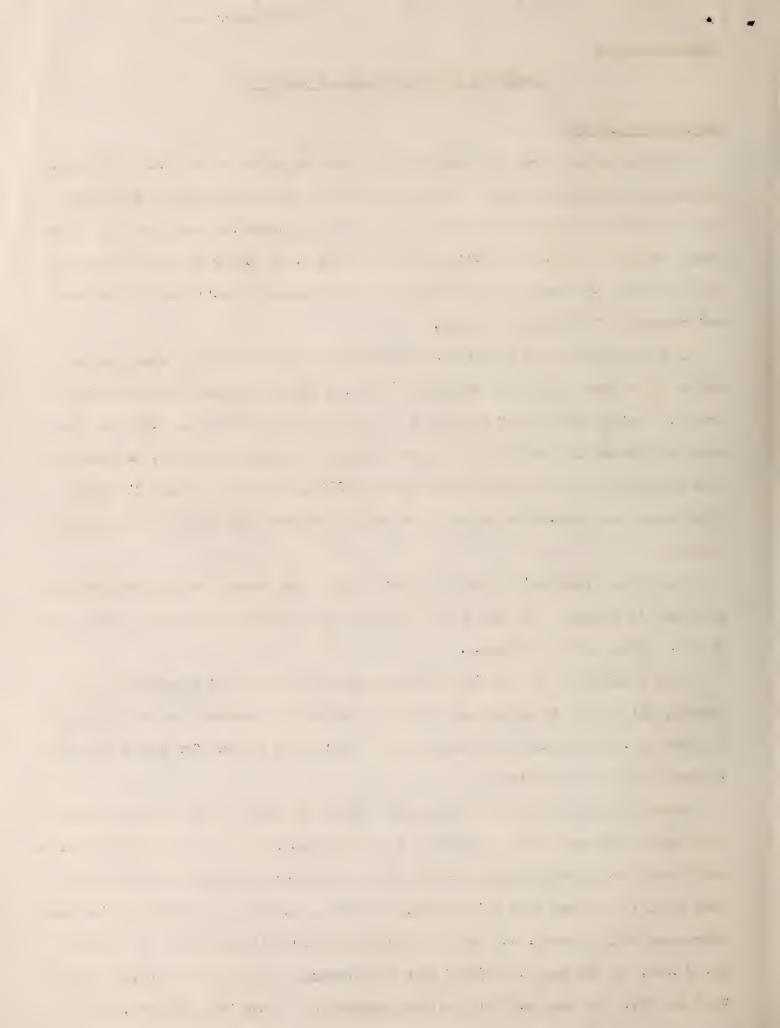
First indications of heightened Communist activity came May 22, when Suripno, member of the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (P.K.I.), then Republican representative in Prague, revealed that Russia had agreed to exchange consuls with the Republic. On Java, Republican officials denied responsibility for Suripno's actions, presumably to show compliance with the Dutch-Republican Renville Agreement of January 17, 1948, which recognizes interim Netherlands sovereignty and hence jurisdiction over foreign affairs.

Later, when Suripno's orders were made public, they showed he had acted with his government's approval, and upon his arrival in Java on August 12 he said he had acted on orders from President Sukarno.

More significant was the fact that Suripno brought with him a secretary, one Suparto, who turned out to be Muso, a leading Indonesian Communist who had fled Java 22 years ago. Apparently Muso carried fresh orders from Moscow, for soon after his return the PKI went into action.

First the Republican Labor federation, Sobsi, announced it was joining PKI and would oppose agreement with the Dutch. A few days later, on August 31, former Premier Amir Sjarifuddin, Head of the Socialist party, surprised all Indonesia by admitting that since 1935 he had been a Communist. His wartime arrest by the Japanese had been attributed to his underground work, but Sjarifuddin said it was due to his Communist activities. On the same day Sjarifuddin also announced merger of his Socialist party with the PKI. The next day PKI disclosed formation of a new "Politbureau", with

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departments for labor, foreign affairs, agitation and propaganda. On September 2
Sjarifuddin's Socialist Youth Movement, Pesindo, with its own armed bands, joined PKI.
South East Asia Drive.

The new developments within PKI have been sudden, but for some time it has been expected that Communist tactics adopted in nearby Burma and Malaya would be applied in Indonesia. It is apparent that Moscow has ordered all its Eastern parties to go on the offensive. In India, Sinkiang and Korea the Communists are more aggressive. In Burma they control large parts of the country and threaten the capital. In Malaya they may bring on their own extermination, but in the process they are spreading disorder and fear. In North China they have set up an independent government. In Bangkok, Siam, the Russian Embassy staff has been greatly increased to direct Communist activities in South East Asia.

This pattern obviously is not the spontaneous outcome of Asiatic unrest or aspirations to independence. China, Korea, India and Burma are already independent. Nationalism in Indonesia and Malaya have followed their own course, on which the present Communist drive is superimposed. In Malaya, and even more so in the Republic of Indonesia, the new Communist offensive not only does not express nationalist aspirations, but may damage them. Chances of Dutch-Republican agreement are threatened when it becomes clear that the Communists are determined, and perhaps have the power, to sabotage agreement. Also, the two-thirds of Indonesia outside the Republic may come to regard early union with the Republic as impossible, and may thus proceed independently to organize their own federal government.

The present Communist thrust into South East Asia can only be explained as part of a global pattern dictated from Moscow. Perhaps it is intended to divert the West's attention from Europe, with the secondary aim of slowing exports of Malayan and Indies tin, rubber and other strategic materials. Or its aim may be permanent Communist control of the entire Far East. In any case, it presents a new problem for South East Asia's peoples and poses questions of policy to the Western powers.

Postwar Communist Activities

In 1945 Mohammed Yusuf revived the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (P.K.I.), claiming it was the legitimate successor of original PKI formed in 1920 and declared illegal after uprisings on Java and Sumatra in 1926. However, many Indonesian Communists remained outside the new PKI.

Yusuf attacked Republican President Sukarno's and Mohammed Hatta's policies, so was arrested March, 1946. Following his arrest, Yusuf's PKI was repudiated by leading Communists who set up a new PKI under Sardjono, who was PKI President in 1925, having returned to Java after the war from Australia, where he headed the Central Committee for a Free Indonesia in Brisbane. Sardjono's PKI at first supported the Government and nominally backed the Linggadjati and Renville agreements.

In 1945 Tan Malakka, a Moscow trained revolutionary now repudiated by the Communists, had organized the Peoples Front of 133 parties and groups, including Sjarifuddin's Socialist Youth Movement (Pesindo). Highly critical of Republican President Sukarno, Tan Malakka demanded resignation of Sjahrir's cabinet in February, 1946. This move provoked withdrawal of Sjarifuddin's Pesindo from the Front, and by March, 1946, all but 40 Front member-organizations had pulled out, giving the Government courage to arrest Tan Malakka.

While in custody, Tan Malakka planned and carried out kidnapping of Prime Minister Sjahrir in June, 1946, demanding his and Sjarifuddin's resignations. Sukarno was not bluffed and placed Tan Malakka in prison.

Meanwhile, collapse of Tan Malakka's Peoples Front had opened the way to formation of a new Left Alliance, Sajap Kiri, including the PKI, the Pesindo (Socialist Youth Party led by Sjarifuddin), the Partai Sosialis (Socialist Party, also led by Sjarifuddin) and the Partai Buruh Indonesia (P.B.I., Indonesian Workers Front, with some Communist influence).

Sajap Kiri supported Sjahrir's cabinet, but also frustrated Sjahrir's policy of seeking agreement with the Dutch and enforcing the October, 1946, truce. As Defense Minister Sjarifuddin, who has since confessed being a Communist, refused to ask Republican troops to carry out cease-fire orders, thus dooming the Linggadjati Agreement

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When in mid-1947 Premier Sjahrir accepted Dutch proposals for implementing the Linggadjati Agreement, he lost Sajap Kiri's support, resigned and was succeeded by Sjarifuddin. Maruto Darusman, PKI's first Vice-President, became Minister of State in the new cabinet. Sajap Kiri folded early in 1948 when Sutan Sjahrir split with Sjarifuddin and formed the moderate Partai Sosialis Indonesia. Other Left parties organized Front Demokrasi Rakjat (Democratic Peoples Front), which nominally supported the present Hatta government. Sjahrir split away because he favored closer cooperation with the Dutch and mistrusted the Front's and Sjarifuddin's Communist orientation.

By September, 1948 PKI's merger with various "front" parties was complete and the Democratic Peoples Front had become in fact a single, tightly controlled Communist party.

The new PKI line, announced early in September by Muso, repudiated the Renville and Linggadjati Agreements and the January, 1948, Truce Agreement. Muso declared, "the status quo lines no longer exist for us" and said that PKI troops would conduct raids in areas under Dutch jurisdiction. He called for resumption of the scorched earth policy and demanded nationalization of all property. Muso said PKI should hold leadership in the Republic and warned the Republic to side openly with Russia against "Western imperialism".

With the Communist capture of Madiun the new line was put into practice. Attacks on Indonesian villages and Dutch patrols in Netherlands controlled areas have also been reported in increasing numbers.

Strength and Tactics.

Though PKI's exact membership is not known, mergers with other parties have given it the strength to defy Republican authority. Furthermore, through various organizations which it has captured, PKI's influence extends far beyond its cwn membership. The January 1948 issue of "Party Life", a Moscow monthly, reported that the "mass party of Gerindo (Indonesian movement), numbering 250,000, has passed a decision to join the Communist party of Indonesia. There are also reports that the Partai Rakjat Indonesia (Indonesian People's Party), with more than 200,000 members; has also decided to join the Communist party."

Absorption of Sjarifuddin's Socialist party, Setiadyit's Labor party and the Socialist Youth Movement has brought in additional numbers, and control of the Republican Labor Federation (Sobsi) provides yet another source of strength. Estimates of PKI's following run as high as a million or more, including its own army.

PKI's tactics in Indonesia faithfully reflect the writings of orthodox Communist thinkers. For instance, the Executive Committee of the Second (1920) Congress of the Communist International laid down the policy that in dependent territories legal and illegal actions should be combined. It also said that popular-democratic independence movements should be supported, since it is easy for colonial governments to suppress purely Communist movements, but extremely difficult to combat genuine nationalist movements.

Stalin, in his "Problems of Leninism", expounds a similar idea, stating that "under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian Power may find itself constrained temporarily to leave the path of revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate and prepare the conditions for a new offensive."

While nominally a Socialist, and as Republican Premier, Sjarifuddin supported agreement with the Dutch, presumably "to give the revolution a respite", but now that he has disclosed his PKI membership and has joined the Madiun revolt it is clear that the Communists have returned to "the path of revolutionary reconstruction."

PKI and the Labor Movement.

The usual Communist tactic of infiltrating the labor movement has apparently had great success in the Republic. Largest Union is Sobsi (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia - The Federation of Industrial Workers). Having recently merged with PKI, it was formed November 29, 1946, and claims 1,300,000 members in 28 unions. PKI took credit for organizing Sobsi, its leader is the Communist Setiadyit and Bujung Soleh of the PKI is a Sobsi propaganda worker. Sobsi was government financed, uses hammer and

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sickle emblem. Setiadyit is also chairman of the Partai Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor party), recently merged with PKI.

Barisan Tani, with its own guerilla bands (Laskjar Tani), is a Peasant Union headed by PKI President Sardjono. Barisan Tani has joined PKI.

The Sarbupri, with 850,000 members, is a union of plantation workers headed by PKI's first Vice-President Maruto Darusman. This organization now absorbed by PKI, has played a key role, having been appointed by T.N.I., the Republican Army, to carry out the Communist inspired "scorched earth policy" in the summer of 1947. A document found by Netherlands troops at Salatiga, dated June 7, 1947, six weeks before the Netherlands police action in Republican territory, gave instructions to Sarbupri and Sobsi in the event of Dutch action. It was signed by PKI member Maruto Darusman, then a Republican cabinet minister. It ordered:

- 1. Total evacuation, with the exception of destruction teams.
- 2. Blowing up of all machinery.
- 3. Burning of all plantations and ringing of rubber trees.
- 4. Sowing of alang-alang and other weeds.
- 5. Spreading of plant diseases.

The "scorched earth policy" was directed not only at properties producing for export, but also at rice mills and other installations which supplied domestic needs, thus tending to create distress and chaos ideal for Communist methods of rule or ruin.

PKI Links Abroad.

Recent disorders in Malaya show what even a small group of Communists, if well led and organized, can do. The danger to Indonesia becomes even more evident when the close relation between Malayan and Indonesian Communists is brought out.

The center of political activity in Singapore is in the hands of the General Labor Union (G.L.U.), which is for all practical purposes controlled by the Malay Communist Party. At the same time, GLU maintains close relations with the Malayan Nationalist Party and the Pembantu Indonesia Merdeka, both Communist oriented organizations closely tied to PKI. The Malay Communist Party itself also maintains close contact with PKI. The following excerpts from a letter dated May 5, 1948, about a trip to Singapore via

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Bukit Tinggi, Sumatra, by the well-known Communist Djamaludin Tamin, give some idea of this relationship:

Gold was given to this Djamaludin to be used for the purchase of arms "for our fellow party-members."

"In case there is not enough money, Djamaludin can ask for aid for this purchase at the Persatuan Kaum Buruh (labor organization) in Singapore." In addition he is to open a special office for PKI, "wherever it is best, according to his opinion, that our party has an office for it alone; at the moment our party is mixed with the Malay Communist Party. We can still cooperate with the Malay Communist Party; we only desire a separate PKI office in Singapore for our members, who come there to meet our comrades-in-battle.... In case certain things happen which are not good for our struggle, strikes should be continued, not only in Singapore and in Malaya, but as soon as possible in the area occupied by the Netherlanders."

That this activity of PKI was condoned by the Republican government is shown by a letter dated June 14, 1948, from the Republican resident of Sumatra's West Coast, Mr. Harun Alrasjid, to Mr. Utoyo, the head of the Indonesia Office at Singapore, which more or less officially represents the Republic in that city. In his letter Harun Alrasjid, acting on instructions from the Republican governor of Sumatra, asked Utoyo to establish an "especially strategic organization" at Singapore, in cooperation with somebody "who is an expert in this." This organization apparently is to perform espionage-work, as well as having to send people "to islands occupied by the enemy, such as Bangka, Billiton, Tandjung Pinang, and other places, such as to make the population there back the Republic. Also, in agreement with the purpose of the letter addressed to you by the Governor of Sumatra, you are allowed to get members of the PKI for this especially strategic organization and to work together with other organizations established in Singapore and Malaya." All expenses were to be borne by the Indonesian Republic.

The tie between PKI and the international Communist headquarters in Moscow has been proven repeatedly. The most important leaders of the party received their training in Moscow. Muso first went there in 1925, seeking Stalin's support for a revolution

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in Java. Following the unsuccessful revolt of 1926 Muso, who was in Singapore, made his way back to Moscow, where he remained until he returned to Java in August, 1948. During his 22 years in Russia Muso received a more intensive Communist training than any other Moscow foreign agent. Highly regarded by Stalin, Muso was groomed to become the chief Communist leader in South East Asia, having attended the Lenin Institute and other schools to study military tactics, political organization, propaganda, economics and foreign languages.

One of PKI's most influential leaders, Mas Alimin Prawirodirdjo, commonly known as Pak Alimin, went directly to Moscow after his exile from Indonesia by the Dutch in 1925. For many years he studied at the Lenin University, where he came into contact with such prominent Communists as China's Chou-En-Lai, Britain's Harry Pollitt, Australia's L. Sharkey, France's Maurice Thorez and the former chairman of the U.S. Communist party, Earl Browder. During the years 1933-1941 Alimin was an active propagandist of the Comintern in Europe, the Middle East, and China. In 1936 he took part in organizing riots in Palestine. At the time of the Japanese push on Malaya and the rest of South East Asia, Alimin was the official representative of the U.S.S.R. in Kuala Lumpur (Malaya) and had taken on Soviet citizenship. When V-J day rolled around, he was active in China, aiding his old friend Chou-En-Lai. Upon receipt of new instructions from Moscow, he proceeded to Java, "to arrive amongst his own people as a messenger from Moscow: Javanese by birth, Russian by citizenship and Communist by faith," as the Batavia correspondent for the Indian "Hindustan Times" so ably put it.

Sardjono, head of PKI before Muso's return, likewise received a Communist education. His main activities were centered in Australia, where he headed the Central Committee for a Free Indonesia. The veteran Communist leader, Tan Malakka, who has never officially been connected with PKI, has also closely followed the Moscow-line. He maintained close relations with PKI in the 20's, after his exile making his head-quarters in Tokyo (where he also spent the war years) and Singapore. One of Alimin's associates in the above-mentioned Palestine disturbances, he is now a leader of the

extreme Left-wing Peoples Revolutionary Movement which early in September clashed with Communist bands at Solo.

Besides the relationships with Moscow maintained by PKI's leaders, proof of this association was found during the Netherlands police-action of July-August, 1947 when quantities of propaganda material originating in Moscow, as well as numerous wall decorations were found, all showing the tie with the Soviet Union. Portraits of Stalin prevailed, and there was a liberal supply of emblems featuring the well-known hammer and sickle.

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